

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Literacy Update

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.791, KRS 158.792, KRS 158.794, 704 KAR 3:480, KRS 164.0207

History/Background:

The purpose of this staff note is to update the Board on activities taken to implement the federal Reading First legislation and the state Read to Achieve Act of 2005. The update for Reading First includes both highlights of year one school-level implementation (SY 2004-2005) and recommendations for a monitoring process to be used to determine sufficient levels of implementation to warrant continuation or discontinuation of funding at the district/school level. The update for on the Read to Achieve Act of 2005 includes an overview of the legislation and the work to date on implementation of the requirements of the Act.

Reading First

Existing Policy. Kentucky's approved Reading First plan funds 74 elementary schools in 42 districts. Each Reading First site receives between \$130,000 and \$170,000, depending on the size of the school and numbers of primary regular and special education teachers to focus on improving reading in the primary grades (K-3). The objective of this federal reading initiative is to ensure that all students read on grade level before exiting the primary program (grade 3). Kentucky's Reading First sites implement a three-tiered model for reading instruction. Within the model, teachers and support staff use a core reading program, supplemental programs, and intervention programs. This comprehensive approach to reading instruction and intervention services requires all stakeholders to monitor student progress carefully. Monitoring occurs through the use of the required Kentucky Reading First assessments, the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) and the Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Reading First sites assess for the purposes of screening, diagnosis, monitoring of student progress and collection of outcome data.

Highlights from Year 1 Implementation

❑ Reading First Infrastructure

The state Reading First coaching team is comprised of ten (10) state Reading First coaches. These ten individuals are assigned to working with the 74 schools in the field and their local university.

Throughout the past year, the ten state coaches and the eleven literacy coaches (hired through the state Special Education Cooperatives) have worked to provide additional front-line support to the initiative. The literacy coaches work with many of the funded sites, but additionally extend services to non-funded schools throughout the state. The state Special Education Cooperatives have supported these positions, which focus on closing the achievement gap in reading for struggling students.

❑ **Federal Technical Assistance**

The KDE Reading First leadership team has taken advantage of the technical assistance provided by the Central Regional Reading First Technical Assistance Center (CRRFTAC). This center provides professional development sessions for Reading First leadership in over 15 states. Over the past year, the center provided a range of professional development topics to support state level implementation, including:

- Reading First Leadership Module: Building Instructional Leadership (designed for Reading First principals and school coaches),
- Three-Tier Model for Reading Instruction: Focus on Tier III Interventions,
- Differentiated Instruction in the Core Reading Program and Intervention,
- Working with English Language Learners (ELL),
- Professional Development for Special Education Teachers,
- Reading First Data: Collecting, Managing, Reporting Needs, and
- Supporting School Level Coaches module.

The KDE team has also worked very closely with our assigned CRRFTAC consultant. KDE has a service delivery plan in place that outlines future technical assistance that will be provided by the CRRFTAC. Kentucky's CRRFTAC contact will participate in upcoming site visits and assist in delivering Reading First content to district and school level Reading First leadership teams.

❑ **Reading First Professional Development**

Over the past year, the evaluation of the Reading First program has documented over 22,247 hours of professional development that has occurred as a part of Reading First activities for teachers, administrators, and district and school coaches. The state Reading First coaches have participated in approximately 3,590 hours of professional development. Individuals involved with this initiative have spoken to the power of the professional development that has accompanied this reading initiative.

❑ **Reading First Sites**

Similar to the previous summer, the KDE Reading First leadership team and coaches provided professional development for all funded Reading First sites. This year, Reading First held twelve summer institutes with very focused seminar sessions for classroom teachers. Approximately 1,600 teachers will participate in Reading First summer institutes.

The seminars lasted two full days and focused on one essential component of reading per day (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension). Teachers selected their topic for study based on specific data sources, including teacher choice for professional growth, student data, and principal and school coach recommendation.

As a part of their seminar study, all teachers received a book that will serve as a tool for a follow-up book study occurring at the local level throughout the upcoming school year (SY 2005-2006). The KDE Reading First leadership team believes that job-embedded professional development based on the needs of the students, the individual teacher and the school plans will create a natural connection to the development of a teacher's individual professional growth plan.

❑ Focus on Special Education

This summer (2005) the Reading First staff and the Division of Exceptional Children Services (DECS) collaborated to design professional development for K-12 special education teachers. In the federal Reading First legislation and the state-approved plan, Kentucky is required to provide professional development in reading to all K-12 special educators.

Since years 3-6 of the Reading First grant includes a focus on professional development for all primary teachers and special education teachers working with primary students in all elementary schools, the Special Education Cooperatives and the Reading First staff collaborated this year to deliver approximately 33 summer institutes targeted for special educators teaching grades 4-8 in Reading First districts. To date, these institutes have been well attended, indicating an immediate desire by the special education field to participate in reading professional development. Upon completion, KDE anticipates close to 2,500 teachers will have received training. In addition, the professional development modules will be made available through Kentucky's virtual learning courses.

❑ Student Achievement

Throughout year one, the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD) collected, analyzed and reported on student achievement for KDE. Recently, KDE received spring student results that indicated an increase in student achievement on both the GRADE and DIBELS assessments (Attachment A). A short description of GRADE and DIBELS is also included as part of Attachment A.

A preliminary evaluation has been included in the State Evaluation Annual Report comparing student achievement across particular core programs used in the Reading First initiative. It should be noted that no conclusions should be drawn from this information at this time, primarily because it represents only a single year of student data and teacher implementation.

The Executive Summary for year one (SY 2004-2005) is attached for the Board's information and review (Attachment B). The summary provides recommendations to the KDE Reading First staff to consider for improving the overall implementation of Reading First in Kentucky schools.

Recommended Process for Discontinuation of State Funding for Insufficient Implementation

A recommended technical assistance and monitoring process that could be used to determine sufficient levels of implementation to warrant continuation of funding at the district/school level is attached for the Board's review and comment (Attachments C, C1, C2 and C3).

Read to Achieve Act of 2005

Existing Policy. Purpose of the Grant Program: In 2005, the Kentucky General Assembly passed Senate Bill 19, which established the reading diagnostic and intervention fund to help teachers and library media specialists improve the reading skills of struggling readers in the primary program. The fund provides renewable, two-year grants to schools to support teachers in the implementation of reliable, replicable, research-based reading intervention programs. These programs must use a balance of diagnostic tools and instructional strategies that emphasize phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, connections between writing and reading acquisition and motivation to read to address the diverse learning needs of those students reading at low levels. The Read to Achieve Act of 2005 replaced former legislation that created the Early Reading Incentive Grant Program, which had been in place since 1998. The legislation also created a steering committee to make recommendations to the Kentucky Board of Education concerning implementation of the grant program.

Steering Committee: The committee, appointed by Governor Fletcher in May 2005, held its first meeting on July 1, 2005. The committee is in the process of providing recommendations on the Request for Proposals and regulations called for under the Read to Achieve Act.

Below is a list of committee members, as appointed by the Governor:

Member	Representing
Lindy Harmon	Primary teachers
Vickie Sloan	Primary teachers
Vikki Hall	Primary teachers
Maria J. Smith	Primary teachers
George L. Patmor, Ph. D.	University professors
Judy Embry, Ed. D.	University professors
Pat A. Higgins, Ed. D.	University professors
Paige Carney, Ed. D.	University professors
Linda M. Handley	Elementary school principals
Greta E. Casto	Certified library media specialists
Jeff C. Hawkins	State at-large
Jacqueline Austin	State at-large
Vacancy	State at-large

In addition to the appointed membership, the Commissioner of Education, the President of the Council on Postsecondary Education, and the Director of the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development also hold positions on the committee.

Staff will be bringing the regulations for the implementation of the Reading Diagnostic and Intervention Grant program to the Kentucky Board of Education at the October meeting. It is anticipated that approximately 100 schools will be funded during this year's competitive grant process.

Also in October, the KBE will receive the annual report on the grant program and its evaluation from the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

The Early Reading Incentive/Read to Achieve Grant and Reading First allow schools to provide research-based reading instruction for primary students that will lead to improved student performance.

Policy Issues:

- What advice does the KBE have for the Reading First staff moving forward with the process outlined for continuation or discontinuation of funding? Does the KBE have any other recommendations for this process?

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Commissioner of Education

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